

Rusper Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125850
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	395541
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Pye

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Muller
Headteacher	Deborah Packham
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Pye

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six lessons, including some teaching the linking of sounds and letters. Of these, four were joint observations with the headteacher. Four teachers were seen. The inspector looked at pupils' work and also heard pupils read. The inspector spoke to parents and carers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils, and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation, and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils. The inspector also looked at 38 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as others returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school come from a predominantly White British background. The largest minority ethnic group consists of pupils of Any Other White background. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is currently below average. The main groups consist of pupils with speech and language difficulties. Currently, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained the Enhanced Healthy Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school, where pupils achieve well because of good teaching. It is not yet outstanding because a few remaining inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils do not yet make the uniformly rapid progress needed to reach even higher standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress and attain generally above average standards in writing, reading, and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Pupils have opportunities to write at length, but the use of an extended writing session for assessment and detailed feedback to pupils is not maximised to help them to improve their work.
- The support and challenge of senior staff has contributed to improving and sustaining good teaching over time. Teachers have high-quality relationships with their classes, which ensure that pupils engage purposefully in their learning. Whilst teachers, generally, use questioning well to consolidate pupils' learning and check their understanding, this is not the case in every lesson. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and supportively, but do not always make it clear how pupils can improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in class and around the school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they have confidence in the adults around them. These views are supported by the vast majority of parents and carers.
- Good leadership and management have ensured a strong vision, based on high expectations. Teaching is led well by leaders through rigorous monitoring and effective performance management. A challenging and innovative curriculum has been introduced, in which the core values of the school have been interwoven effectively into the 'learning adventures' and daily life of the school. The school is not yet identifying specifically where the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are covered and taught in each 'learning adventure' and in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the teaching of basic skills is plotted carefully in the planning of the curriculum to ensure progression in these skills from year to year.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics by eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching and ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide a regular opportunity for all pupils to complete an extended piece of writing, leading to in-depth assessment and detailed feedback to pupils about how to improve their work
 - use questioning that consistently challenges all pupils
 - give clear guidance to pupils when marking about how to improve their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Small numbers in each cohort mean that children's skills and experiences on entry to Reception Year vary from year to year. Children achieve well because of good teaching and the majority reach and sometimes exceed the expected goals for their learning by the end of the Reception Year. They also achieve well because they have positive attitudes to school. This was illustrated well when the children showed resilience when cutting, sticking, and wrapping as they designed a mini-beast.

Pupils' attainment in reading is at least average by the end of Year 2 and is above average by the end of Year 6. Younger pupils show increasing confidence when using their knowledge of sounds and letters to aid their spelling. In Reception Year, they learn successfully how to blend sounds such as 'sh' and 'ai'. By Year 2, the pupils have made good progress and sound out letters in order to spell a word correctly. Younger pupils work hard to extend their use of vocabulary when writing poems based around fireworks. One pupil wrote that 'Fireworks go bang and sparkle in the sky. Fireworks pop, bang, shoot and whiz fizz...' Older pupils use more difficult adjectives, similes, and metaphors to write increasingly complex sentences. Pupils in Year 2 talk about their favourite authors, choose books independently, and enjoy reading to adults. Higher-attainers in Year 2 are comfortable when reading more complex words and are increasingly reading with expression.

Last year, pupils' attainment dipped a little. Whilst the pupils in that small group made good progress, they started from lower points. In work seen during the inspection, current Year 6 pupils are attaining at higher levels and making good progress. For example, in mathematics, they show a good understanding of approximation methods to work out perimeters. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Of these pupils in 2011, not all of the small numbers without a statement in Year 6 did as well as their peers. In work seen during the inspection and in the detailed tracking of pupils' progress, the gap is closing and these pupils are now making similar progress

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to that of other groups. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are also making similar progress to their colleagues.

Parents and carers praise the school, writing comments such as 'I cannot rate this school highly enough' and 'My children are happy, settled and progressing academically.' Pupils support such positive comments. Inspection findings support these positive views about pupils' progress.

Quality of teaching

In lessons, high-quality relationships ensure that pupils remain engaged in their learning. Teachers circulate during the lessons well, checking on work and providing further challenge as required. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher was very aware of the need to provide more difficult questions relating to the use of coordinates. Pupils benefit from the varied activities provided by teachers, and react positively when their learning is related to practical situations. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils made good progress when measuring the playground to establish whether it could accommodate a spaceship. Back in class, other pupils measured the amount of water needed to operate the different machinery on board the spaceship, such as the cooling system. 'Talk partners' and opportunities for self-evaluation have a beneficial impact on the development of pupils' social development. Not all teachers use regular consolidation periods during lessons to identify gaps in pupils' learning, or explain in their marking how pupils can improve their work. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge when questioning, although not all use higher-order questioning that revisits pupils' answers to challenge them further.

The great majority of parents and carers and all pupils who completed the questionnaire agree that teaching is good, a view that is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils enjoy the learning adventures presented to them. 'Poles Apart', for example, allows pupils to benefit from learning about geography and melting ice and to extend their cultural knowledge of the local area. Pupils say that the 'teachers make it a challenge'. The teaching provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development during music lessons, assemblies, and 'circle time'. Older pupils, clearly, enjoyed presenting their Samba music skills to parents, carers and to other pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The great majority of pupils say that behaviour is good in school and that they feel safe. Of those parents or carers who completed the inspection questionnaire, the vast majority agreed. Inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good. The core values of the school are interwoven extremely well into the daily life of the school and undoubtedly contribute to the high levels of respect shown by pupils. Pupils say that bullying is not really an issue and that any incidents are acted upon effectively and promptly by the school. Pupils are able to describe the different aspects of bullying; for example, older pupils have a good understanding of cyber and 'phone

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bullying. They talk of the use of mobile 'phones for bullying and are aware of the potential dangers of the internet. Attendance is average; in spite of the school's rigorous efforts, several parents and carers continue to take holidays during term time. This is preventing attendance from rising further. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and keep healthy. Pupils' personal and social development is developed well through opportunities to act as school councillors and house captains and when they talk to the parish council about local issues.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's ambition, based on constant improvement to standards and core values, is evident in all the school's work and shared by all adults. In this small school, management responsibilities have been distributed well, with high levels of accountability. All staff contribute to the accurate monitoring and evaluation of the school, which leads to the identification of very relevant development priorities. For example, after the dip in attainment levels last year, leaders conducted a review of the curriculum to identify when and where basic skills are taught systematically across the school. Although this has led to some improvements, the school acknowledges that this aspect of its work is not yet tracked rigorously enough.

Good teaching has been sustained and teachers and senior leaders conduct regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress, which result in the quick identification of those who are in danger of falling behind. Rigorous annual written reviews of assessment data are completed by class teachers and contribute to decisions about future challenges for individual pupils. Not all pupils know how to improve their work and there is not yet a regular assessment of pupils' extended writing so that detailed feedback can be given to pupils. The governing body gains a good knowledge of the school through visits and reports. This enables it to raise questions over aspects of the school's performance. Checks on adults are carried out rigorously, annual child protection training takes place, and staff who join the school later have an interview to ensure their understanding. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the school. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of its work, with all pupils given support that enables them to show their skills and knowledge, both in and out of the classroom, and to make good progress.

The introduction of the innovative curriculum, which helps to motivate pupils and gives them a broad and balanced education, provides further evidence of the school's strong capacity to improve. Core values, such as creativity, are emphasised when pupils study 'The Hindu Creation Story'. Furthermore, '5 Alive' sessions linked to these core values have been introduced and pupils start the day by deciding in which order they complete these activities. These contribute to the pupils' social development. The curriculum promotes pupils' moral and cultural development extremely well when pupils study South Africa and consider the issue of apartheid and the work of Nelson Mandela. One parent commented 'The learning adventures have captured my son's imagination and are always exciting and challenging. The core values have helped him mature and I think will have a lasting impact beyond Rusper School.' This was typical of the views of others.

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Parents and carers are complimentary about the quality of communication and partnership. They like particularly the information they receive about the 'learning adventures' for the half term and benefit from regular workshops which inform them of how to support their children's learning. Pupils benefit from some well-established partnerships with other schools and the locality. These have resulted in pupils' participation in sports activities, as well as undertaking visits to the local community shop.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rusper Primary School, Horsham RH12 4PR

You may remember my recent visit. You were eager to tell me about your school and I listened carefully to what you told me. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

You go to a good school. You make good progress as a result of good teaching. You told me that you enjoy the learning adventures that you are set and that you enjoy school. You behave well. You told me you feel safe and this helps you concentrate on your work. You also said that if there are any incidents, then the school acts quickly to help you.

The school does well in many things, but I have asked the adults in the school to do some things to improve it even more. I have asked all of your teachers to check regularly on how well you are doing in lessons; you could help by telling them when you are finding the work too hard or too easy. I have also asked them to make sure that their questioning makes you think hard before you answer – one of your core values! I have asked the school to organise a writing opportunity where you can get detailed information back from teachers about how to improve your work.

Your headteacher leads the school well and, like the other adults, wants things to improve even more. The school makes good plans for the future. I have asked all leaders to make sure they know in detail where your literacy and numeracy skills are taught so that they help you to make even faster progress than you currently do.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye
Lead inspector

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